

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, KS, US
SUBJECT: NDP CHAIRMAN STRESSES BALANCE, HARMONY AND MODERATION
IN HIS NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE

REF: (A) SEOUL 0664 (250850Z), (B) SEOUL 0278 (120820Z JAN 77)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: IN HIS RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT PAK'S NEW YEARS'S PRESS CONFERENCE, NDP CHAIRMAN YI CHOL-SUNG PEPPERED GOVERNMENT WITH MILD BUT OFTEN SPECIFIC CRITICISMS. MAIN THRUST OF NDP PRESS CONFERENCE, HOWEVER, STRESSED BALANCE, HARMONY, AND MODERATION IN NDP ROLE AND ANY PROPOSED CHANGES IN PRESENT SYSTEM. END SUMMARY

1. ON JANUARY 26, NDP CHAIRMAN YI CHOL-SUNG RESPONDED TO PRESIDENT PAK'S NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE IN THIRTY MINUTE PRESENTATION OF HIS OWN, FOLLOWED BY BRIEF QUESTIONING BY PRESS. CHAIRMAN YI LISTED NDP'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROPOSALS, OFTEN DIFFERING WITH PRESENT GOVT. POLICY BUT COUCHING HIS DIFFERENCES IN MODERATE TERMS. IN ADDITION TO OFTEN REPEATED CALLS FOR HARMONY AND BALANCE, HE DESCRIBED ONE OF NDP'S MAJOR GOALS AS ACHIEVING "DEMOCRATIC NORMALIZATION OF DOMESTIC POLICIES."

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2. CURRENT POLITICS. YI SPECIFICALLY CALLED FOR :
(A) REPEAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURE 9 AS IT HAS BECOME FOCUS OF INTERNATIONAL CRITICISM OF ROK;
(B) RETURN OF ALL E.M. 9 DETAINEES (INCLUDING MYONGDONG DEFENDANTS) TO ACTIVE ROLES IN SOCIETY;
(C) RESTORATION AND GUARANTEE OF DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY;

(D) REVITALIZATION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, POLITICAL PARTIES
AND PRESS. AND
(E) PROPOSED CONSULTATIVE BODY TO RECOMMEND LOCAL AUTONOMY,
FIRST TO CITIES, AND THEN TO COUNTY AND VILLAGE LEVEL GOVT.

3. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. YI MAINTAINED THAT ROK DOMESTIC SITUATION IS VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THUS MAKES ROK'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION INSECURE. OF COURSE, PEACE HAS BEEN KEPT BY FOUR MAJOR POWERS IN AREA BUT HE PREDICTED THIS BALANCE WOULD CHANGE IN THREE TO FOUR YEARS. ALTHOUGH AGREEING WITH "INTENT" OF PRESIDENT PAK'S PROPOSAL OF NON-AGGRESSION TREATY WITH NORTH AND U.S. CONDITIONAL WITHDRAWAL, YI SAID WAR CANNOT BE PREVENTED BY PEICE OF PAPER OR TREATY. HE STRESSED THATDEPARTURE OF U.S. TROOPS WOULD BE DANGEROUS UNLESS (A) MILITARY BALANCE WAS ACHIEVED BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH; (B) KOREA/JAPAN/U.S. COOPERATIVE "SYSTEM" WERE REINFORCED; (C) KOREA/US MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY SHOULD ALSO BE REINFORCED IN SUBSTANTIALLY SAME MANNER AS US/NATO AND US/ PHILIPPINE TREATIES; (D) UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE SHOULD BE SENT TO DMZ; AND (E) THERE MUST BE FOUR-POWER GUARANTEE OF PEACE ON PENINSULA. AS FOR KOREAN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, HE NOTED THAT KOREA WAS STILL TOO DEPENDENT ON ITS ALLIES. IT SHOULD REEXAMINE PRESENT CHINESE AND RUSSIAN POLICY TOWARD ITSELF.

4. ECONOMIC AND OTHER INTERNAL POLICIES. YI CALLED ROKG'S FOURTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN MUCH "TOO GREEDY." HE ASKED THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S BUDGET AND SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE BE MADE PERMANENT INSTEAD OF AD HOC. HE DEPLORED RECENTLY DISCOVERED "IRREGULARITIES" (READ CORRUPTION) IN SOCIETY AND CALLED FOR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE
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OF BANKS. IN LABOR FIELD, HE MADE TRADITIONAL CALL FOR RIGHT TO FORM UNIONS, COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND ACTIONS AND ASKED FOR COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITY OF MINIMUM WAGE FOR LOWER INCOME BRACKETS. HE CRITICIZED CULTURAL POLICIES AS OFTEN FRONT FOR ROKG PROPAGANDA, EDUCATION AS NOT CONCERNED ENOUGH WITH HUMAN PROBLEMS, AND URBAN POLICIES AS DISREGARDING IMPORTANCE OF PROPERTY RIGHTS, WHICH HE CLAIMED AS IMPORTANT AS HUMAN RIGHTS.

5. IN HIS QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH PRESS, CHAIRMAN YI OPINED THAT NORTH KOREA'S JANUARY 26 CALL FOR POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS WAS NOT DIRECT RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S NEW YEAR'S PRESS CONFERENCE PROPOSAL. YI SUGGESTED THAT RED CROSS WOULD BE BETTER CHANNEL FOR ANY TALKS AND WORRIED THAT NORTH'S GESTURE WAS PEGGED FOR SENSATIONALISM AND NOT SUBSTANCE. DURING Q&A HE MADE ONE REFERENCE TO PAK TONG-SON SCANDAL, NOTING KOREAN PUBLIC REPERCUSSIONS FROM SCANDAL COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO LACK OF FREE PRESS. IN REPLY TO WHETHER HE WOULD SEEK MEETING WITH PRESIDENT, YI NOTED THAT IN A FUNCTIONING TWO-PARTY SYSTEM SUCH A CONSULTATION WOULD BE HELPFUL.

6. PRESS REPORTS OF SPEECH HAVE NOT CARRIED REFERENCES TO REPEAL OF EMERGENCY MEASURE 9 AND ALMOST ALL DETAILS OF OTHER PROPOSALS A THROUGH D LISTED IN PARA2. DRP SPOKESMAN NOTED YI GAVE AN ACCURATE PRESENTATION OF NEED FOR DOMESTIC REFORMS. YUCHONGHOE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT HE HIMSELF WAS UNAWARE THAT DEMOCRACY NEEDED RESTORING HERE.

7. COMMENT: AS YI CHOL-SUNG TOLD AMBASSADOR (REF A), HE WAS STRIVING FOR MODERATION AND HE APPEARS TO HAVE ACHIEVED IT, USING A LITTLE BUCKSHOT AIMED AT ROKG TO MAINTAIN HIS CREDIBILITY AS OPPOSITION PARTY HEAD. YT'S PROGRAM IS STANDARD NDP STUFF.

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